



SUPPORT THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND FAIRNESS ACT

June 18, 2004

Senator Edward Kennedy
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative George Miller
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20151

Dear Senator Kennedy and Representative Miller:

On behalf of National PTA's six million members, which include parents, teachers, students, and child advocates, I am writing to express my strong support for the No Child Left Behind Fairness Act of 2004. This legislation would require the Department of Education to retroactively apply its own new rules for determining whether public schools have met a key measurement of student achievement under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The new legislation would bring relief to potentially thousands of schools that may get an unfair grade by the Department because of its refusal to apply its own new rules retroactively.

National PTA supports the goals of No Child Left Behind: maximizing achievement for all groups of students, closing achievement gaps, and improving teacher quality. We were also pleased when the Department issued final regulations providing flexibility in adequate yearly progress (AYP) determinations for students with disabilities and limited English proficiency. However, we were deeply concerned when Secretary Paige later ruled that the final regulations would not apply retroactively. This decision will prevent schools from being inaccurately labeled as "needing improvement" even though they would pass under existing standards.

We strongly support your proposal to require retroactive implementation of the regulations in question. Your bill will ensure that we not only measure school progress, but that our measurements are accurate and in accordance with up-to-date regulations. We look forward to working with you to ensure passage of this important legislation and thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to our nation's public schools. For further information on this or other National PTA priority issues, please contact Nancy Segal, Legislative Manager, at (202) 289-6790.

Sincerely,

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